Dear EDLE Alumni, Students, Faculty, and Friends,

The Fall 2011 edition of the EDLE Program newsletter features the success of two of our recent graduates who received pre-K – 12 administrative licensure. We are proud of what they have accomplished in reaching the position of principal—one in a high school and one in an elementary school. Their talent has been recognized by the school divisions that have elevated them to this critical position in education leadership and it is our great hope that they are able to draw on wisdom they have gained from being a part of our program.

They are but a small sample of the many fine graduates we have had and an indicator of the great potential of students currently making their way through the program.

We believe that the managerial skills and knowledge we provide are critical to our graduates’ understanding of how to perform in administrative positions. We are also searching for ways to enhance candidates’ instructional leadership, a set of characteristics long called for in research and emphasized by our school division partners in a meeting last spring. We have made important strides in the past four years with the implementation of our research course, through changes we have made in the internship over the years, and by focusing on improving teaching and learning in the content of other courses. We seek to provide the most authentic experiences we can in the classroom so that our graduates are well-prepared novices with the disposition to be outstanding team players.

Leadership is both complex and subtle, making it challenging to teach. Nevertheless, our mission is to provide exceptional instruction in leadership because it is a vital component of effective pre-K – 12 education.

The EDLE faculty take our responsibility for preparing leaders in Northern Virginia very seriously. We believe the program is strong, but we know that it can be better. For this reason, we have placed ourselves on a path of continuous improvement which will help us to make important changes in the future. We welcome your feedback and suggestions as we strive to deliver the best leadership preparation program possible.

- S. David Brazer

Above: Dr. David Brazer, EDLE Program Coordinator

The format of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) will change in 2012. The paper version of the test will no longer be administered. Students will take the SLLA online during a range of dates. The first such range has been announced as January 24-28, 2012. We believe that moving to this new format is likely to allow for more frequent test administrations than in the past.

The Northern Virginia test-taking centers (not universities) are located in Falls Church (2) and Alexandria (1). The ETS website (http://www.ets.org/sls/) is now updated to reflect changes in the administration of the exam.
**SPOTLIGHT ON EDLE 690**

**EDLE 690 Using Research to Lead School Improvement**

“School Improvement Projects—Not Just a Graduate School Paper”

David Brazer

I received an e-mail recently from Michele Carlson, a member of the Regional North 10 cohort that meets in Fairfax. Michele was a student in my EDLE 690 Using Research to Lead School Improvement class in the Summer 2011 semester. As our students know, the class requires the development of a school improvement project proposal that is implemented during the internship. Michele’s project is to teach writing in a coherent fashion across the elementary grade levels. She wrote the following email regarding the implementation of her project:

I just wanted to pass along a little update on my SIP—writing instruction school wide. You mentioned that I’d need a lot of “buy in” and support from key players to get my project off the ground and I’m happy to report I have received both. My principal funded my entire budget and threw in additional resources that I hadn’t had the nerve to ask for initially. She loved the idea of the vertically articulated team and, as a result, we ended up restructuring all of our committees to mirror that structure.

We now have school wide “Learning Threads” for Writing (which I am planning and facilitating), Reading, Math, and Response to Intervention. Each grade level team has a member in each of the four groups. We meet monthly with very deliberately planned sessions, utilizing strategies from the Adaptive Schools program. We have two instructional coaches at our school who have been guiding us in writing effective agendas and applying appropriate meeting strategies to get all of the staff involved. We always include one piece of research to support [each session]. Each team member then goes back to their team, shares the outcome or big idea of the session and then explains a “task” to be accomplished by the next meeting. They might need to implement a strategy, collect data, etc. We use this task data/feedback as a discussion piece in our next meeting. The response from the staff has been very positive. We have a reflection/feedback piece built into the end of each meeting, so I am getting personal feedback on the content of my sessions as well as the delivery, which has been invaluable. It’ll make the reflection piece of the SIP much easier.

My principal sat me down and told me that she felt my project was very valuable and timely. For that reason, she didn’t want me to tell anyone that it was a project for my grad. program. Her rationale was, if people thought she was just letting me do my little project for school, they might not take it seriously and view it as temporary. Her advice was to view my leadership work as an opportunity to meet the needs of my school that also happen to meet the requirements of my internship; not the other way around.

You were very helpful while I was planning my SIP. You added a needed dose of reality to my pipe dreams. I just wanted to let you know that it is actually happening the way I envisioned it…honestly, it’s been given more weight than I imagined and the possibilities are VERY exciting!

Michele

This message warms my professor heart in many ways, but here are two that seem quite important: 1) Michele demonstrates the potential of school improvement projects to make real and lasting change in candidates’ schools; and 2) Michele, her principal, and the faculty are using the collaborative structure set up in FCPS to make the changes they have decided are in their students’ best interests—and it is working. Michele’s principal provides a vivid example of the power of administrative support and encouragement.

INTERESTED IN EARNING A Ph.D.?

The Education Leadership Program is now recruiting for applicants to the Ph.D. Program. If you are interested in learning more about how to earn your doctorate with either a specialization or concentration in Education Leadership, go to [http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/edleadership/info_session/](http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/edleadership/info_session/) to register for an information session on December 7. The session will meet at 4:30 p.m. on the Fairfax campus in Finley Hall, room 119.

**“Her advice was to view my leadership work as an opportunity to meet the needs of my school that also happen to meet the requirements of my Internship...”**

Michele Carlson

Below:  Students walking toward Enterprise Hall on the Fairfax campus. Photo by Evan Cantwell.

“School Improvement Projects—Not Just a Graduate School Paper”

David Brazer

Above:  Michele Carlson, EDLE Student

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**Introducing New Faculty**

We are delighted to bring two new faculty members into the Education Leadership Program family. Each comes to us with a unique set of experiences and gifts with respect to preparing future leaders and scholars.

**Anne-Marie Balzano**

Dr. Anne-Marie Balzano brings a broad range of practical experience in K-12 education to the EDLE Program, particularly in the areas of program development and school administration. She earned her Ed.D in Educational Leadership from Mills College in Oakland, CA and a Master’s of Arts in Teaching English from Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, CA.

Dr. Balzano began her career in Palo Alto, California as a middle school language arts and reading teacher, where she was awarded a grant from the Community Foundation of Santa Clara to design curriculum and programs to support struggling readers and at-risk students. Her work was recognized at the district office, where she taught workshops for other educators using her curricula. As the assistant principal for guidance services at Henry M. Gunn High School in Palo Alto, she conducted qualitative research to discover which support programs best help middle school students transition to high school. She then created a three-day summer workshop for incoming ninth graders to help integrate them into the high school culture and prepare them for success. Both programs have shown remarkable sustainability and are still being utilized by the Palo Alto Unified School District.

Most recently, Dr. Balzano was the Executive Director of The Campus School of Carlow University in Pittsburgh, PA as well as assistant professor in Carlow’s Department of Education. At The Campus School, she designed and implemented a professional development program for teachers to improve instruction and student learning over a two-year period. Using the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, teachers focused on curriculum development, inquiry learning, collaboration, and reflective practice. Teachers then developed and assessed their own growth plans through written reflections, small group sessions, and quarterly individual meetings.

Dr. Balzano joined the Educational Leadership Program in August and is teaching EDLE 616 Curriculum Development and Evaluation this semester. Her research interests include principal as instructional leader and teacher leadership. A native of Washington, DC, she is thrilled to be at George Mason University.

**Diana D’Amico**

Dr. Diana D’Amico is an historian of education and education policy. In both her research and teaching, she strives to use history to understand urban school policy and cast fresh light on the social and political forces that shape and travel through the schools.

Dr. D’Amico earned her Ph.D. in the History of Education from New York University in the fall of 2010 where she was also a Spencer Fellow. Her dissertation, “Claiming Profession: The Dynamic Struggle for Teacher Professionalism in the Twentieth Century,” historicizes the notion of the “highly qualified teacher.” Through an examination of the ways in which school leaders, teacher educators and unionized teachers in New York City delineated the qualities, attributes and rewards of professionalism, her work calls attention to the structural constraints surrounding teachers’ worklives and professional authority.

In the candidate search process, we learned that Dr. D’Amico was viewed by her colleagues as a true team player—someone who brings strength and ideas to group process with an open mind. She proved this in the EDLE Program even before her contract began by working with a team of faculty to help design a new doctoral course of study for a proposed concentration in Education Leadership. Her contributions to larger program projects continue as Dr. D’Amico teaches EDLE 634 Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership both on campus and in a cohort this fall.

Before joining the Education Leadership Program at George Mason University, Dr. D’Amico was a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Education Department at Brown University. She moved to Virginia with her husband, who is also a professor at GMU, and her two little girls. She is excited to be here and eager to work with students, faculty, and our school division partners.
**GRADUATES ON THE MOVE**

**Eric Doyle, Principal Manassas Park High School Manassas Park City Schools**

Eric is currently a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. in Education Program, specializing in Education Leadership. Completing his licensure course work in Summer 2007, he served as assistant principal at Kettle Run High School in Fauquier County. Eric was appointed principal of Manassas Park High School in the Manassas Park City School District this past summer.

Eric’s vision for his school is that all students and adults matter regardless of their job, education, background, or behaviors. Everyone deserves to be heard regarding situations impacting their lives. The relationships we have with each other must be based on mutual respect. Everyone, not just teachers and administrators, must work together to educate students. The environment established in a school must be safe for learning and growing; characterized by high levels of trust among students, teachers, staff, administrators, and the community; and nurturing to all students no matter their current levels of achievement. Eric strives to create a “Culture of Learning” at Manassas Park High School.

The greatest accomplishment in Eric’s young principalship is his modeling beliefs, values, and important educational concepts that set the tone for successful teaching and learning. The faculty and staff have been receptive and unified in their acceptance of these ideas. Faculty and administrators visited every rising ninth grade student’s family prior to school to welcome them and answer questions. Parents expressed their pleasure with open, prompt, and transparent communication with the administration and faculty.

A vivid EDLE memory for Eric is taking team-taught courses with Dr. Brazer and Dr. Dunklee in which the professors and students often discussed what it was like to be a Principal. Dr. Brazer and Dr. Dunklee shared stories of their experiences. Eric suspected the stories had become somewhat exaggerated over time, until he became a principal himself. “Now I fully understand what they meant by ‘the greatest thing about the job is the unknown.’”

**Armando Peri, Principal Pine Spring Elementary School Fairfax County**

Armando was a student in the Accelerated Certification Cohort II, a partnership between LEAD Fairfax and the EDLE Program. After serving as an elementary and middle school assistant principal, he was appointed last summer as the principal of Pine Spring Elementary School in the Fairfax County Public Schools.

Armando’s vision for the school is to keep and expand the strong professional learning community (PLC) culture and community support that has led to incredible success for Pine Spring, a Distinguished Title I school. By encouraging teacher leadership, sharing best practices, fostering relationships with parents, and focusing on each student he believes that Pine Spring will continue to impact the lives of our community’s families.

In September of this year, Pine Spring returned to the early release Monday schedule. The administrative team created a master schedule that creatively preserves instructional time for language arts and mathematics. The schedule of special courses ensures one hour of collaborative time for teachers each week. Additional planning time is protected on Mondays. These structural adjustments at Pine Spring support the development of the school’s PLC by maximizing opportunities for collaborative teams to work productively.

The camaraderie that developed among the Accelerated Certification Cohort over the year they spent together in the Education Leadership Program is among Armando’s most vivid memories of the program. “I remember that January morning in Fredericksburg when most of us met to take the SLLLA exam. It was a great comfort to have a supportive group to plan, joke, and celebrate with in preparation for and at the conclusion of the 6 hour writing test. Many of us have become professional friends who talk and share our experiences, challenges, and achievements. Just as we supported each other during our cohort year, it is common to get a call or email asking for ideas, input, or just a sounding board.”

**“Many of us have become professional friends who talk and share our experiences, challenges, and achievements.”**

*Armando Peri*

**Above: Armando Peri, EDLE Alumni**
The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the agency that provides evaluation and accreditation for the College of Education and Human Development. After a year of candidate achievement data collection and analysis and report writing, the NCATE Board of Examiners, along with representatives from the Virginia Department of Education, visited us at George Mason University on October 16 – 18. Final results are not yet known, but preliminary indications are for a positive report on the College and for the Education Leadership Program specifically.

We wish to acknowledge and thank the EDLE students and faculty whose assistance with the NCATE visit was invaluable. Dennis Kayatt (FCPS), David Landeryou (DCPS), Michelle Maldari (DCPS) and Amanda Swartzwelder (PWCS) hosted Board of Examiner members during a poster session on Sunday, October 16. They provided their perspectives and expertise to explain the significance of EDLE 690 Using Research to Lead School Improvement and the annual EDLE Conference. Alex Case (FCPS), Eric Doyle (MPCPS), and Tony Terrell (FCPS) participated in a principal focus group meeting with the Board of Examiners on Monday, October 17. Scott Bauer, David Brazer, Roberto Pamas, Rob Smith, Alan Sturrock and Bev Woody are the faculty members who participated in various activities during the visit, including the poster session.

A great deal of time and effort from many, many people is needed to create effective accreditation reports and to show the Board of Examiners who we are and what we do. This task was made much easier with the help of our outstanding students and dedicated faculty.

The EDLE Program Office will be moving on campus December 7th & December 8th. Please bear with us on these two days as phones and computers may be temporarily unavailable.

Our new location will be:
4400 University Dr.
Thompson Hall Suite 1300
Fairfax, VA  22030
Phone and fax numbers will remain the same.

The EDLE program continues to grow as we gear up for a new Loudoun cohort beginning January of 2012 and two new cohorts, Fairfax and Regional North, for summer 2012. While the Fairfax cohort is reserved for FCPS teachers and goes through two separate application processes, the Regional North Cohort is open to teachers from all counties. In addition to our regular cohorts, EDLE is currently recruiting with LCPS for a Special Education Leadership Cohort in Loudoun to begin in late spring or summer of 2012. For more information on upcoming cohorts contact Dr. Farnoosh Shahrokhi at fshahrok@gmu.edu.

**UPCOMING COHORTS**

**SPRING 2012:**
- Loudoun 8
- Loudoun SELE

**SUMMER 2012:**
- Fairfax 10
- Regional North 11

**FALL 2012:**
- Prince William 18
- Loudoun SELE

Below: Fairfax Campus, fall. Photo by Creative Services.
CEHD Core Values

In the context of an enduring college-level and university-level commitment to teaching, research and service, the College of Education and Human Development also holds the following core values:

**Collaboration**
Collaboration is an important human activity that involves shared responsibility in promoting healthy, productive lives and educational success. We commit ourselves to work toward these goals in genuine partnerships with individuals, families, community agencies, schools, businesses, foundations, and other groups at the local, regional, national and international levels.

**Ethical Leadership**
In all professions represented by the college, leadership is an essential component denoting ability and willingness to help lead professional practice to higher levels. We commit ourselves to practice ethical leadership through deliberate and systematic attention to the ethical principles that guide all leaders in a moral society.

**Innovation**
We have a history of creating dynamic, innovative programs and we are dedicated to continue creating innovative approaches in all areas of our work. We commit ourselves to seeking new ways to advance knowledge, solve problems, improve our professional practice and expand on our successes.

**Research-Based Practice**
The best practice in any discipline is based upon sound research and professional judgment. We commit ourselves to basing our instruction, scholarship and policy recommendations on well-established principles that, wherever possible, emerge from research and reflection on its implications for professional practice.

**Social Justice**
Social justice embodies essential principles of equity and access to all opportunities in society, in accordance with democratic principles and respect for all persons and points of view. We commit ourselves to promoting equity, opportunity, and social justice through the college's operations and its missions related to teaching, research, and service.

**EDUCA T I O N  L E A D E R S H I P P R O G R A M  C O N T A C T  I N F O R M A T I O N**

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**EDLE Vision**

The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K—12 education through teaching, research and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.